


# **Gwandalan/Summerland Point Action Group Inc**

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<b>Submission No:</b> .....	66
<b>Date Received:</b> .....	1-6-08
<b>Secretary:</b> .....	

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1st June 2008  
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The Secretary  
Standing Committee on Climate Change, Water, Environment and the Arts  
PO Box 6021  
House of Representatives  
Parliament House  
Canberra ACT 2600  
Australia

Dear Sir/Madam,

## INQUIRY INTO CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ON COASTAL COMMUNITIES.

We represent the residents of a small village located on the Central Coast of NSW on the border between Wyong Shire and Lake Macquarie Shire Councils. Our location is on Crangan Bay, the last undeveloped bay on Lake Macquarie and part of the last undeveloped area between Newcastle and the Central Coast. The twin villages of Gwandalan and Summerland Point who share this peninsula in Lake Macquarie have a population of around 5000 people.

Currently our area is under threat from developers and the NSW Government, who want to develop a further 887 home sites on our peninsula and 900 at nearby on the coast at iconic Catherine Hill Bay. The Government sees this as an opportunity to acquire, free of charge, some land for National Park in return for the right to develop approximately 200 ha of coastal land. Much of the land proposed for development is environmentally significant, as is most of this area. We believe the whole area is of such significance, as the last reasonably intact area on this coast, that it should all be declared National Park. We have made submissions to Department of Environment and Water Resources under the EPBC act for specific species but we believe the area is critical for many species of plant, particularly terrestrial orchids, and is critical habitat for a variety of animals.

It would be appropriate if remaining areas of coastal bushland were subject to much greater scrutiny before development.

The large population increase due to these developments would introduce many more car dependant residents in areas that have little infrastructure, few work opportunities and no significant public transport. This would in turn add to the greenhouse gases and climate change effects. Such developments would also be a watershed case as there is much more privately owned land in the area and owners would be queuing to be allowed to develop. Furthermore the threat posed by developers who want to use the proposed bio-banking system will be given greater momentum. Justification for this proposed development stems from the Lower Hunter Strategic Plan in which the NSW Government grants these developers a dispensation to ignore sustainability criteria.

We believe also that there are many other coastal areas in NSW which will be exploited by developers if this development is approved. The NSW Planning Department seem to be ignoring their own Coastal Development policy. (State Environmental Planning Policy No.71)

A predicted sea level rise of 1 metre or more and possible increase in storms and tidal surges is going to affect quite a lot of properties in this area. One area seen as possibly being involved is the land between Budgewoi lake and the ocean near Budgewoi. It is felt that a rise in the sea level and storm surges could breach a new opening into the Tuggerah Lakes system. This may well extend flooding to low lying properties all around those lakes. Plans need to be made to cope with such an eventuality.

The compulsory installation of water tanks in new homes to be connected to toilets and washing machines has saved many litres of water. The slow uptake of tanks in the case of older houses should be accelerated and some incentive provided for the necessary changes to plumbing. Whilst there is some reluctance on the part of government bodies to recommend use of tank water for drinking purposes I believe that a suitable way could be found for the filtering of tank water which would reduce the need for expensive plumbing changes in established dwellings. I also believe that the present requirement for 5,000 litres of water storage in new homes as required by the BASIX policy is inadequate and should be at least 10,000 litres. Coastal areas do receive a lot of rain and this should be utilised to the greatest possible extent. Councils/water authorities may be deterred from pursuing this objective by the possibility of lost revenue. If that becomes a problem we believe the cost of town water should be increased which would then provide an even greater incentive to install a tank.

Yours Faithfully



Kevin Spencer  
President